

**ALLAGASH WILDERNESS WATERWAY ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES**

June 18, 2021 9:00 am – 10:40 am  
Meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Council Members Present: Peter Bourque, Chair, Farmingdale; Dave Basley, Ashland; James MacCartney, National Parks Service Rep.; Josie Allen, Haymock Lake; Tobey Pineo, Hampden

Bureau of Parks and Lands Staff: Andy Cutko, Kevin Brown, Mark Deroche, Ron Hunt, Abigail Andreasen

Members of the Public Present: Bob McIntosh and Paul Johnson (AWW Foundation); Melanie Sturm (NRCM)

**Introductions and Opening Remarks**

Director Andy Cutko opened the meeting at 9:02 am. Chair Peter Bourque asked Council Members to introduce themselves, followed by BPL staff and members of the public. Mark Deroche was welcomed as the new AWW Superintendent. For 20 years, Mark worked for social services where he started a wilderness therapeutic experience for at risk youth. He joined BPL in 2012, where he eventually became the Northern Regional Manager for Maine State Parks. Abigail Andreasen was also welcomed as the new Secretary Associate for BPL, who will serve as note-taker for the meeting. It was noted that Council Member Brent Hardy would be absent during today's meeting.

Peter asked if there were any questions from the council for Mark Deroche.

- Josie Allen stated she's been aware of prior Superintendents allowing their own interpretations to influence their decision.. Her hopes are for the Superintendent to stay more objective in the future, relieving some of the controversy that occurs because of this.
- Mark agreed with Josie and stated the objectives of the position will be guided by the AWW management plans, statutes, rules, regulations, and the Council itself.

**Approval of March 19, 2021 minutes**

Chair Peter Bourque asked if there were any comments or corrections on the March 19, 2021 minutes. Hearing none, Peter moved that the minutes be accepted.

**Director's Report – Andy Cutko**

Director Andy Cutko began the Director's report by reflecting on bills working their way through the legislature that have relevance to the Allagash Waterway.

- The first noted was the Governor's commitment of \$50 million to the State Park System that comes for the use of federal funds. The Legislature is reviewing and amending the bill (LD 1733), and we are still awaiting the final dollar amount and additional guidance on what the money can be used for. The state's intent is to use the money for brick and mortar infrastructure, where several priorities for the Allagash Waterways fall under.
- LD700 poses a cap on the amount of revenue that comes from State Parks and goes back into the general fund. Money over the cap would be placed into a non-lapsing account to be used for State Park infrastructure and capital improvements. This bill is also still working its way through the legislature.
- LD657 involved State Park enforcement and the level of training for staff. It specifically touched on staff's ability to issue summons and carry firearms. Although this did not pass, it generated discussion amongst staff to integrate the issuance of summons and citation and implementation of the exclusionary rule into staff training. It also brought up a discussion to allow better access to background checks for staff.

Andy read a letter written from a citizen who recently used the Allagash Waterways. The citizen, after a series of unfortunate car related incidents, was stuck with no transportation by land or water in over 50 miles from any help. Park Rangers from the Allagash and Churchill Lake went out of their way to help get them home safely. The citizen went on to say that "it's rare that our type can be so struck with humanity that we will dig deep into recognize exceptional performance".

### Follow-up Questions/Comments

- David inquired about the status of the open seat. Andy responded that we are still awaiting movement from the Governor's office for Melford Pelletier's seat.
- Toby Pineo's term ends in July of this year meaning they will need to identify another representative who has knowledge and experience in sustainable forest management, who is a private landowner or an employee of the landowner, whose property abuts the Waterway in order to fill that seat.
- Toby was thanked for his years on the Council.
- Andy reminded everyone that there are two five-year terms, appointed by the governor for the Council Members.

## **2021 Winter Activity Report – Kevin Brown**

### Winter Delivers

#### **Allagash Lake**

- Propane – 1 tank
- Gasoline – 9 tanks
- Tables – 1 x 10' at Island Campsite (2 table legs)
- 2 fire grates

#### **Eagle Lake**

- Propane – 5 tanks
- Superhumus – 4 totes @ Breezy Point, 4 totes at Priestly Point
- Tables – 2 x 12' tables @ Eagle Lake Ranger Station
- Firewood – ¼ cord

#### **Chamberlain Thoroughfare Bridge**

- Propane – 2 tanks @ Lock Dam Camp
- Superhumus – 1 trailer load to Gravel Beach Campsite

#### **Umsaskis**

- Superhumus – 2 totes @ Ledges Campsite on path to lake

#### **Camp Pleasant**

- Propane – 4 tanks

#### **Round Pond**

- Propane – 4 tanks
- Tables – 2 x 12' seat planks
- Firewood – 2 totes

#### **Michaud Farm**

- Tables – 5 x 10' tables

### Staff Updates

Dennis Hickey, new Michaud Farm Assistant Ranger. Brendan Norwood working at Churchill Depot.

### Public Use

In 2020, the number of people visiting was low, but the number of family/group parties was high. With camp itineraries coming in for 2021, use numbers are expected to be high. May 2021 was the highest number of people passing through Churchill Depot since 2006. The general winter use for the Waterway was normal based on anecdotal data.

## **Updates/Continue Discussion (Bureau Staff and Council)**

Kevin reported that Jocelyn Hubbell, BPL Interpretive Specialist, is designing a panel that will be placed on the kiosk at the parking lot located near the trailhead to the locomotives. It will include information regarding the tramway that is

also located there. This will be made from the same material that was used at Churchill Depot's kiosk. The hope is to provide increased interpretive services to this location.

Kevin Brown also presented on DataNet, which is a hidden infrared public use counter. It was placed during the winter months at the Tramway Snowmobile Trail and then moved to the Locomotive Foot Trail to get a better feel for public use. This program shows hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly usage reports along with different use pattern reports. The counter is a helpful tool to see when the use is at the highest, how many people per day or which timeframe sees the greatest amount of use.

#### Tramway Snowmobile Trail

- Placed February 8<sup>th</sup> and moved March 18<sup>th</sup>. The data was collected February 9<sup>th</sup> through March 17<sup>th</sup> to insure only full days of data were accounted for. The counter will be placed out for the full winter next season to get more data than just the 6 winter weeks collected this season. The count that is acquired through DataNet is divided by two, to insure no one rider is being counted twice. One set of data that was acquired showed that on March 6<sup>th</sup> a total of 208 people were counted on the Tramway Snowmobile Trail.

#### Locomotive Foot Trail

- Placed May 8<sup>th</sup> and picked up June 16<sup>th</sup>. Data was collected from May 9<sup>th</sup>-June 15<sup>th</sup>. The counter was placed 20 feet down the trail to capture how many people walked in the see the locomotives and the tramway from the parking lot. Data captured showed that on May 15<sup>th</sup> there were 43 people that went down the trail. The count is divided by two, to insure no one person is being counted twice. The intent is to leave the counter out on the trail till late October or early November.

#### Comments/Questions

- David asked if the DataNet would count wildlife. Kevin answered that it would, therefore cannot be perfectly accurate. However, it will not count smaller animals such as birds.
- Andy asked the question of how the data points Kevin has seen so far have matched his expectations of the usage at these locations. Kevin responded that although he had an idea of usage, there were still some surprises. For example, there has already been a day this year with over 100 people walking into the Locomotive Foot Trail.
- David again spoke to congratulate Kevin on putting together the data and to point out that it was very well needed.
- Josie thanked Kevin and stated that this data is also important in terms of watching trends, management, developing future policies and keeping the user experience as positive as possible.

#### Churchill Dam, Barn and Boarding House Repair

Andy presented that BPL is cautiously optimistic about the federal funding and the ability to use that for capital improvements, repairs, etc. Money from the Federal Government would address most of the repairs needed, if not all of them. Due to this, previous funding strategies discussed have been placed on hold. The funding is still being worked over by the Legislature, therefore it is a wait and see process. If money is received, the availability of contractors to do the work would be the next challenge.

#### **Other Old Business**

No other old business discussed.

#### **Other New Business**

Peter reported that one item brought to his attention by AWW Foundation member Paul Johnson, stated that the Council and BPL should perform a thorough annual review of the strategic plan. The plan accepted in November 2010 by

Commissioner Townsend and should be revised and updated every 10 years. It was suggested by Peter that the Council along with Andy Cutko, Ron Hunt and Mark Deroche review the plan, making any necessary changes. It was agreed to by Andy and the Council and was planned to discuss further via email or Microsoft Teams before the September meeting.

### **Public Comments**

- Paul gave an update on the Natural Resource Inventory work that is underway this summer. A contractor overseeing the inventory project, which will inform interpretive materials for the Waterway. In six months, she's gathered and charted 16 individual maps that shows the resources that occur along the Waterway within the corridor, from Telos to Allagash Village. She is planning more trips this summer focusing on head water lakes and plans the following summer to focus on the river from Churchill Dam to Allagash. A \$15,000 grant was received for the inventory work from the Maine Outdoor Heritage Fund. More funding will be applied for in the future as the field work will continue through summer 2022, with a final report due spring 2023.
- Bob McIntosh mentioned that the AWWF is expanding their youth program with the help of funding from the Quimby Family Foundation.
  - Adding three separate three-weekday camp trips
  - Expanding the multi day trips from two to three-days
  - Adding a four-day multi trip.
- Bob informed the group that funding has been received from the Quimby Family Foundation to start The Classroom to River Project. This project involves three middle schools in the area to use the resources along with the cultural and historical aspects of the valley for a curriculum based experiential learning.
- Bob mentioned some of their board members participating in The First Light Learning Journey with the Wabanaki Nations. The goal is to exchange ideas, interest, support, and information to educate Allagash users on the Wabanaki history there.

### **Closing**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in person, at the Bangor BPL office Friday, September 24<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. Josie suggested getting together at Haymock Lake either summer or early fall for informal introductions.

### **Adjournment**

It was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at appx. 10:37 am.